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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 000667

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SUBJECT: SPAIN: MOD POLICY DG ON NCIS/OSI, AFGHANISTAN,
LEBANON, MISSILE DEFENSE, AFRICOM, KOSOVO

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: MOD Director General for Policy Major General Benito Raggio told PolCouns on March 26 that he is glad to see a positive conclusion to negotiations over regulations for the activities in Spain of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) and USAF Office of Special Investigations (OSI). He complained that defense matters have become overly politicized domestically, saying that the political debate interfered with military decisions and with the Spanish people's understanding of what Spain and NATO are doing in places like Afghanistan. Raggio said that Spain is satisfied with its role in Lebanon, but that while both the US and the Lebanese Army want Spain to do more, it is limited by the UN mandate. On missile defense, Raggio said that Spain has questions about the cost and coverage of the US initiative and that, for Spain, missile defense is always a NATO issue. He noted that despite a recent "protocol" trip to Russia by the Spanish CHOD, the Spanish military is not a fan of the Russian military, which it finds very difficult to work with. Raggio said that Spain is anxious for more information on Africa and the new AFRICOM as it develops. PolCouns pushed Raggio on the need to implement the Ahtisaari plan in Kosovo, but Raggio warned against radicalizing the Serbs. END SUMMARY.

-- NCIS/OSI --

¶2. (C) Raggio said that Defense Minister Alonso is aware that MOD and OSD teams have completed work on the NCIS/OSI regulations that are required by the bilateral defense treaty. He said that Spain is pleased by the final agreement and that once the agreement is signed in the US, he will be delegated authority to sign on behalf of MOD. (NOTE: As of April 9, MOD had received the signed agreement from OSD and was working through the mechanics of the signature process. END NOTE.) Raggio said that he expected the MOD to make public the signed agreement almost immediately after the Spanish side signs it. PolCouns said that we were not surprised that the agreement would become public, but reminded Raggio of the need to keep the US out of Spain's domestic politics and suggested that MOD coordinate with the Embassy to ensure that the public presentation of the document was positive for both sides.

-- AFGHANISTAN --

¶3. (C) Noting that the MOD and MFA political directors were at that moment traveling for a week in Afghanistan, Raggio complained that press coverage and political debate over Spain's participation in the NATO-ISAF mission in Afghanistan focuses on deaths and troop numbers when it should focus on improvements that ISAF is making in people's lives. He said that in Afghanistan, Spain and NATO are doing innovative political and reconstruction work, but coverage focuses on

the traditional military aspects. When PolCouns pressed Raggio on whether Spain would send more troops to beef up its presence in the Regional Command-West and/or to staff the NATO-ISAF headquarters, Raggio said that Spanish CHOD GEN Sanz had already been talking to the NATO military staff about staffing the headquarters at some point. Regarding Spain's pledge last fall to send a UAV to Afghanistan, Raggio said that MOD was in the process of buying a UAV, probably this year, and would deploy it as soon as possible after the purchase.

-- LEBANON --

14. (C) Raggio said that Spain's 1100 troops deployed with UNIFIL were doing a good job in a zone that is more dangerous than it looks. He said that the presence of UN troops in Lebanon allows time for political rebuilding, noting that Fuad Sionara deserves more time. Raggio said that he knows that the US wants Spain and UNIFIL to be more proactive, but the UNIFIL mandate is clear and limited. He also said that the Lebanese army had recently requested fuel and explosives from the Spanish brigade, but that Spain was unable to fulfill such requests. He said, we will train their EOD teams, but we can't give them the things that they want.

-- MISSILE DEFENSE --

15. (C) PolCouns reviewed with Raggio the case for a missile defense system that could protect Europe and the US from new threats, reminding him that the US had explained its plan repeatedly to NATO and to the Russians. Raggio said that Spain had appreciated getting information on the plan at NATO, but said that Spain had some concerns about cost and coverage and looked forward to the upcoming visit of the

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Missile Defense Agency deputy director to get more information on these issues. He also said that MOD is frustrated with Russia, with which it has been difficult even to negotiate overflight clearances. Raggio said that Defense Minister Alonso's meeting with his Russian counterpart in Sevilla and the recent trip of the Spanish CHOD to Moscow have been pro forma. Raggio said he was looking forward to the briefing by Missile Defense Agency Deputy Director General O'Reilly (which took place the next day; reported septel) and appreciated the USG's effort to keep Spain informed on the issue.

-- AFRICOM --

16. (C) Raggio said that Spain would appreciate being kept up to date on US plans for the new AFRICOM. Raggio, who was deployed with a UN mission in Angola earlier in his career, said that Spain is always looking for information about Africa, especially given its deployment to Congo last year in support of elections, the recent problems with illegal immigration from west Africa, and ongoing conflict in Somalia and Darfur. PolCouns undertook to work with our military colleagues to keep Spain informed of AFRICOM planning.

-- KOSOVO --

17. (C) Raggio raised Kosovo; PolCouns took the opportunity to underscore the importance of quickly moving forward with the Ahtisaari plan. She emphasized the need for US and European unity in pressing for the kind of solution offered in the Ahtisaari plan, noting that KFOR needs to stay in place. Raggio said that we need to think of the Balkans as a strategic block, best dealt with by bringing it into NATO and the EU as soon as possible. He warned against demonizing Serbia or giving Serbs any excuse further radicalize. Raggio also noted that this would be the first time that the UN had given independence to a piece of a sovereign country. Polcouns emphasized that the history and circumstances surrounding Kosovo's current status make the situation unique, not a not a precedent for other European nationalist

issues (including Spain's Basque issue).
Aguirre